

A Host of Memories

Volunteering to Host a Visiting Athlete Pays Big Dividends.

There are more goals than just the opponent's net at the other end of the field when FIS Middle School and High School players compete. In addition to our athletes playing to the best of their abilities (and hopefully winning), our students are expected to grow as global-citizens. They travel to new locations, make new friends and lasting memories.

Key participants who are not in uniform are Frances Dielmann and Shannon Philipp. Dr. Dielmann is a 22 year veteran of FIS, mother of a 1998 graduate-athlete of FIS, and currently the Athletic Department Administrative Assistant. On her team is Ms. Philipp, an eight year veteran of FIS who is currently on her family's 2nd assignment in Germany. Ms. Philipp, who "plays" several positions, is the proud mother of an FIS athlete, the Vice President of the Booster Club (ABC), the Tournament Housing Coordinator and the Administrative Assistant to the Athletic and Activities Directors.

According to Will Moncrief, the Director of Athletics at FIS, "Without the team of Dielmann and Philipp, athletic competitions at FIS would not be possible. They help to provide a positive experience for athletes, making it possible to often win on the field and always off the field."

Dr. Dielmann shared a secret from her playbook. "Getting kids to make new friends from different cultures...and experiencing new places are part of the international athletic and academic experience."

Dr. Dielmann explained in detail, as only a doctor of law could, the conditions for team membership. She said ISST (International Schools Sports Tournament) and SCIS (Sports Conference of International Schools) participation in sport competitions

require the entire family to support the school and athlete. Dr. Dielmann said the families' housing of athletes

and working the concession stand are the backbone of the program off the field.



The author's children with visiting athletes from London.

Off the field, FIS athlete families are required to periodically provide a parent to work the concession stand and regularly open their homes to visiting athletes during home games. While not every parent dreamed of flipping burgers or running a hotel when they arrived at FIS, the experience for many is rewarding.



Martha Boston-Majetic, a mother of two FIS athletes, said, "It's fun to meet children from all over the globe and see how quickly they develop friendships with FIS students. Earlier this season, I had four high school girls spend over three hours at the dinner table, sharing stories, without even a single yearning for their electronic devices."

Ms. Phillip, who has spent countless hours at the ABC concession stand, is responsible for coordinating the housing of approximately 120 visiting athletes for the four major tournaments held each year at FIS. Tournaments are run separately from the typical weekend sports competition. Ms. Philipp said "Hosting competing athletes is such a fantastic experience to share with our kids. It is only possible at an international school." Ms.

Philipp shared a story of when her family hosted four rugby players from an opposing team that beat FIS on the field during Friday competition. "My son Killian was clearly frustrated immediately after the match. During dinner that night at my house, Killian and our guests shared pointers on how to be better players... I believe that the display of sportsmanship and bonding over sports were the best part of the tournament."

While Dr. Dielmann is able to house 60 to 120 students most every weekend with athlete families during the regular season, Ms. Philipp typically has to reach-out to the larger FIS community for tournaments. "Three days before a tournament, I usually need to find 30 beds." Ms. Philipp said even FIS administrators and faculty, as well as parents without kids in the Upper School Athletic program open their homes. Shelly Kelly, a mother of two girls in the Elementary School, housed four girls from the American School of London (ASL) for the ISST Softball Tournament last spring. Ms. Kelly said, "It's the case where everyone wins. The girls from London had a comfortable and safe place to stay, and my daughters had a fun time with ideal role models."

Frankie, an ideal role model and Grade 11 student playing infield for the American School of London (ASL), said, "Our team works well together and I hope the Kelly girls will one day have the same, fun experience." Teammate Isobel, a Grade 11 student playing outfield for ASL, jumped in and added, "We are all great friends and great teammates."

Nicolette, a friend and teammate to all and twin sister to Isobel, said, "We get an experience that is safe and welcoming so we can concentrate on our homework and softball." But it's more than just homework and softball. Cammie, playing outfield, spoke of the cultural experience. "The schnitzel was so good. Going to an old German town and restaurant was so much fun, and we couldn't have done that without our host family."

"These experiences both tighten and broaden us. They make us even closer as an international community."

Visiting athlete's parent

Isobel and Nicolette's parents attended the weekend matches and offered their own thoughts on the housing program. Their father said, "Seeing how different people live helps them choose how they live." Their mother added, "It's nice for them to have this cultural experience. Our children take these great experiences and that is what makes them who they are." Frankie's father, displaying his fatherly concern for his child, said, "It is good to know there is a responsible adult looking after the girls." Her mother added, "These experiences both tighten and broaden us. They make us even closer as an international community."

The FIS Warriors athletes have many trophies to display in the new FIS Sports and Learning Center. The entire FIS community has priceless friendships and memories from participating in the athletic program. Mary Lou Retton, American athlete and winner of five medals in the 1984 Summer Olympics, is quoted as saying, "A trophy carries dust. Memories last forever."

*Emmett Kelly,
FIS Parent*